

Remote meeting
Minutes of a meeting of
Council
on Monday 5 October 2020

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Council members present:

Councillor Simmons (Lord Mayor)

Councillor Goddard (Sheriff)

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Corais

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Fry

Councillor Garden

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Humberstone

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor Malik

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Tarver

Councillor Tidball

Councillor Upton

Councillor Wolff

Councillor Altaf-Khan (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Bely-Summers

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cook

Councillor Curran

Councillor Donnelly

Councillor Gant

Councillor Gotch

Councillor Henwood

Councillor Howlett

Councillor Iley-Williamson

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor Lygo

Councillor McManners

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Tanner

Councillor Taylor

Councillor Turner

Councillor Wade

Apologies:

Councillors Azad, Haines, Harris and Simm sent apologies.

The minutes show when Councillors who were absent for part of the meeting arrived and left.

27. Declarations of interest

Minute 32

During the item, Cllr Henwood sought advice. The Monitoring Officer advised that he not take part in the vote because one of the sites listed in the report was adjacent to his property and so the outcome of the vote may affect an area close to his property which was a disclosable pecuniary interest. It was not possible for the Monitoring Officer to check the location of the site relative to the property more precisely at that late stage, and upon advice Cllr Henwood abstained in the vote.

28. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 20 July 2020 as a true and correct record.

29. Appointment to Committees

Council agreed to delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance to confirm the appointment to the vacant seat on the Audit and Governance Committee following a nomination from the Leader of the Labour Group Cllr Brown.

30. Announcements

The Lord Mayor reminded Council this was his last time in the chair as Lord Mayor before handing over to his successor Cllr Lygo at the next meeting on 30 November.

It had been a more eventful extended year than he had hoped and planned for. He had been involved in communications (press releases and videos) around Covid to support public health messages, and attending online events and some in-person events as restrictions allowed. This included virtual conferences and events with Oxford's twin cities.

For Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor would be involved pre-recording a remembrance service and wreath laying hosted on the Council's social media platforms just before 11am on Sunday 8 November 2020. An in-person event was not possible due to Covid.

The Sheriff, Cllr Goddard, reported that he had attended fewer activities than planned and sadly many events had been cancelled because of Covid regulations. He had a thoroughly enjoyable year nonetheless despite the challenges Covid had brought.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Brown, drew attention to the communications around Covid to support public health messages and to promote the practical and economic support the Council offered.

She welcomed new and returning students to the city.

She reported that Cllr Martyn Rush had stood down from the Council because he was leaving the city. His seat could not be filled as the government's Covid restrictions prevented by-elections until May 2021. She recorded, and the Lord Mayor on behalf of Council supported, her thanks to Cllr Rush for his excellent work as the Living Wage Champion.

The Lord Mayor asked the City Rector to speak. Rev Buckley reminded Council this was the season of harvest: a time of thanksgiving and sharing and he thanked the Lord Mayor, the Council and Councillors for all their work in the city.

31. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

There were no addresses or questions.

32. Land acquisition and Project Approvals for the development of homes in the HRA

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing Services seeking project approval, delegations, and budget, to enable spending from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), on land purchases, build contracts and other necessary agreements and associated development costs for the purpose of delivering affordable housing.

The Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Cllr Rowley, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

The Monitoring Officer advised and Cllr Henwood then confirmed that he would not take part in the vote because one of the sites listed in the report was adjacent to his property and so the outcome of the vote may affect an area close to his property which was a disclosable pecuniary interest. It was not possible for the Monitoring Officer to check the location of the site relative to the property more precisely at that late stage and upon advice Cllr Henwood abstained in the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** a revision to the HRA capital budget in 2020/21 of £31.647m, in order for the schemes listed in this report (paras 11 to 40) to be added into the capital programme funded predominantly from additional borrowing; and
2. **approve** a revision to the HRA base (revenue) budget from 2021/22 on, for £235k to be added, for the creation of the Affordable Supply Programme and Enabling Team to manage and co-ordinate the various work streams to deliver the programmes.

33. Quarterly Integrated Performance 2020/21 - Q1

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services and Head of Business Improvement giving an update on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters as at 30 June 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, Cllr Turner, introduced the report, outlined the pressures on the Council's finances caused by the impact of the Covid pandemic, and answered questions on the report before proposing the recommendation.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to agree an increase in the capital budget relating to the replacement housing management system of £423k funding as outlined in paragraph 16 of the report.

34. Approval of a contract award for a revenues and Benefits system

Cllr Aziz joined the meeting during this item.

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services submitted to Cabinet on 9 September 2020 seeking project approval and delegated authority for the Head of Financial Services to award a contract for the Supply of a Revenues and Benefits system.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services, Cllr Chapman, introduced the report and proposed the recommendation. This was agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to make a budget allocation of £735k within the Council's capital programme for 2020-21 and note the savings accruing to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

35. Decisions taken under Part 9.3 of the Constitution

Council considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance setting out the decision taken by the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) using the powers delegated in Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution.

The Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Cllr Rowley explained the reasons for taking the decision to enter into an agreement with A2Dominion for the use of Canterbury House for 50 weeks from 3 August 2020 to accommodate rough sleepers and to allocate a budget for this.

Council resolved to note the decision taken as set out in the report

36. Extension of Chief Executive's Fixed Term Contract

The Chief Executive, Gordon Mitchell, withdrew from the virtual meeting for the duration of this item.

Council considered the report of the Head of Business Improvement asking Council to approve the recommendation of the Appointments Committee to extend the Chief Executive's fixed term contract.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Brown, introduced the report and proposed the recommendation. This was agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to extend the Chief Executive's fixed term contract to 30 April 2021.

37. Questions on Cabinet minutes

Questions asked on:

12 August - Minute 44

9 September - Minute 56.

a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 12 August 2020 of Cabinet

Cabinet Minute 44 Quarterly Integrated Performance 2020/21 - Q1

Cllr Gant asked for an update on the eligibility for and amount of government support expected to offset additional costs, and government support to offset losses incurred, as a result of the economic and social impacts of the Covid pandemic.

Cllr Turner answered that the Council had to submit returns to Government after the Head of Financial Services had reviewed and certified that losses were Covid-related. So far roughly £3m support was anticipated, offset against £12m of losses. There may be some small support for specific work streams. It was now clear that Government expected local authorities to bear the brunt of losses.

b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 9 September 2020 of Cabinet

Cabinet minute 56 Implementation of the Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) for Oxford North (Northern Gateway)

Cllr Wolff asked if the Council was exposed to bearing any of the costs for infrastructure for the Oxford North development.

Cllr Hollingsworth answered that the Council was not.

Cllr Wade asked for confirmation that if Thomas White Oxford (TWO)/ St John's College did not have to repay the £10m of HIF grant this upfront grant provision would be taken into account at a later stage when looking at the viability and the impact on provision of affordable housing, as she would like this increased from the current 35%.

Cllr Hollingsworth explained the background to the allocation of the HIF money: £10m was allocated pre-planning application based on assumptions including 25% affordable housing and the planning permission requires 35% affordable housing, a decision predicated on the £10m HIF not being repaid.

If it is to be repaid to Homes England it affects the scheme's viability. There is an ongoing discussion with Homes England about retaining the grant to be used as intended to support affordable housing, as its repayment makes it harder to secure additional affordable housing when the Council and TWO revise the viability assessments as agreed as part of the planning process.

38. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

40 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 12 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the printed pack of these minutes.

39. Outside organisation/Partnership report - Children's Trust Board

The Lord Mayor took this and the next item before the public speakers were heard at around 7.00pm.

Council had before it the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities on the Oxfordshire Children's Trust.

Cllr Tidball introduced the report and the work of the Trust but was not able to respond to questions due to technical difficulties. She asked that members send their questions in writing to be answered outside the meeting.

Council noted the report.

40. Annual Scrutiny Report 2019-20

Council had before it the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee providing a report on the activity of the Scrutiny function over the civic year 2019/20.

Cllr Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, presented the report. He noted that more than half of back bench councillors participated in the work of the committee and the review groups, and he thanked all the councillors and officers involved for their contributions over the past year.

Council noted the report.

41. Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

There were 7 addresses to Council:

- a) Clare Robertson spoke in support of motion 17a on Designated Bathing Water Status for the River Thames.
- b) Liz Sawyer spoke about Oxfordshire Liveable Streets and in support of motions 17d and 17j.
- a) Tim Jones, representing the Oxford African Caribbean MultiCultural Association, spoke about the association's plans.
- b) Tim Bearder and Andrew Heaver both spoke about the Oxford Green Belt and in support of motion 17h.
- c) A speaker spoke in support of motion 17k on Domestic abuse and Covid 19 workplace and community safety.
- d) Colin Aldridge spoke about the Vagrancy act of 1824.
- e) Magdalene Sacranie asked Council to support the Charter for Compassion.

The full text of these speeches as submitted and summaries of written responses and verbal responses from the Cabinet members given at the meeting are set out in the printed pack of these minutes.

42. Motions on notice 5 October 2020

Council had before it 12 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

Motions agreed:

- a) Designated Bathing Water Status for the River Thames Adopting the C40 Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force principles
- b) Applying and monitoring Coronavirus Restrictions (as amended)
- c) Local Government reorganisation

- d) Introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to Oxford City (as amended)
- e) Going wild (as amended)

Motions were not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished:

- f) A consistent definition of net zero buildings
- g) Government Proposals for Planning Reform
- h) Planning system and undermining of Local Democracy
- i) Chinese New Year 2021
- j) Liveable Streets initiative
- k) Domestic Abuse and Covid-19 workplace and community safety
- l) Carbon targets

a) Cross party motion: Designated Bathing Water Status for the River Thames

Cllr Linda Smith, seconded by Cllr Wolff proposed the submitted cross-party motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note. Cllr Gant supported the motion.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council notes that the River Thames is chronically polluted with sewage. It is currently legal for Thames Water to dump raw, untreated sewage into the river at times of heavy rainfall when treatment works are overwhelmed. Its sewage works spilled untreated liquid waste into the upper Thames for over 17,000 hours during 2019.

Contact with polluted water can endanger people's health; furthermore untreated sewage is bad for wildlife.

This Council asks Thames Water to immediately provide real time data of where and when sewage works are overflowing so that Oxford residents will know without delay about the risks of taking to the river to swim or participate in other water sports.

This Council calls on Thames Water to upgrade its sewage treatment works so they are fit for the 21st Century, and take account of a growing population and more extreme rainfall events due to climate change.

This Council notes that the Environment Agency has had its funding slashed since 2010 which has reduced its capacity to enforce environmental regulations. Environment Agency staff numbers have been cut and there has been a sharp decline in the amount of sampling carried out. Consequently pollution incidents have increased while the number of prosecutions have fallen.

This Council asks the Leader to write to urge the city's Members of Parliament to demand adequate government funding for the Environment Agency and to do all they can to hold the agency to account for the important responsibility it has protecting our waterways and to ask our MPs to support stricter environmental legislation for the UK after we leave the EU, and reject any proposals to use Brexit to weaken current environmental protection laws.

This Council requests Cabinet adopt plans for an application for Designated Bathing Water Status for a stretch of the Thames in Oxford.

Designation by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs would mean improved monitoring of water quality and better protection for the river from pollution. It

will ensure Oxford residents have access to the information they need to be properly informed about the risks of enjoying our beautiful river Isis.

b) Applying and monitoring Coronavirus Restrictions

Cllr Wolff, seconded by Cllr Simmons proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note, and accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Brown.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion as amended was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Council notes that concerns over coronavirus (Covid19) continue with the ever present threat of even tighter restrictions being implemented here in Oxford. At the time of writing, Oxford City has entered amber alert on several occasions, based on weekly case numbers per 100,000.

On September 22 the Government announced further restrictions in England.

Under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England), published in July 2020, considerable powers have been given to Oxfordshire County Council to make a direction to, for example, to restrict access to, or close, individual premises, to prohibit certain events and to restrict access to, or close, public outdoor places in Oxford and elsewhere across the County. In September, the County agreed to pass on the powers to enforce these rules to the City alongside its existing environmental health duties.

This Council hopes that these new powers will never be needed, but agrees that it needs to be prepared to respond rapidly, strategically and decisively to the issuing of any direction as well as responding in a coordinated manner (alongside other authorities) on other local matters relating to management of coronavirus, the provision of public information and the impact on Council service delivery in Oxford (for example, liaising with the universities, public health authorities and others).

This Council therefore agrees to ask the Assistant Chief Executive and Head of Regulatory Services to *produce a detailed briefing for members* setting out how these powers will be implemented, including the decision making process, and how Members will be kept informed of action taken under these powers to ensure transparency and accountability.

c) Local Government reorganisation

Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Hayes proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note,

Cllr Roz Smith, seconded by Cllr Gant proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote the amendment was not agreed.

After debate and on being put to the vote the original motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council notes that despite the urgent need to concentrate on recovery from the COVID pandemic and lockdown, the Government seem determined to pursue local government reorganisation as part of an explicit centralising and anti-democratic agenda. Evidence of the same agenda is clear in proposals for planning and for the

NHS. The Government's criteria require over-large local authorities remote from their populations, and elected mayors whose primary accountability will be to Central Government rather than to local people.

This Council recognises the enormous economic and social challenge currently facing our city and our most vulnerable citizens and states its firm resolve to take every opportunity to support local businesses, local people and their health and well-being.

Council notes that local business leaders and employers have clearly said that now is not the time for local government to be looking inward, but to be working together to solve the problems the current crisis has caused. This Council agrees.

This Council is appalled that it is in this context that the government is proposing instead to reorganise local government for ideological reasons, putting at risk our ability to support our city and its citizens in their time of need.

If, as now seems possible, the government itself feels that this is not the right approach, this Council calls upon them to make that clear. This council notes that leading Labour, Tory, Liberal Democrat and Green councillors from across the county are on the record as saying they do not support the imposition against local people's wishes of a large, remote and over centralised authority.

This Council makes clear that the expense and disruption caused by a reorganisation now would be a wilful act of harm to Oxford, our economy and our citizens.

This Council therefore asks the Leader to write to the Secretary of State to make clear their proposals for local government and to seek reassurance for local citizens that no such reorganisation will be imposed upon Oxford. Instead this Council asks that the Government gives the necessary powers and financial support to all Oxfordshire's local authorities in this time of crisis.

d) Introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to Oxford City

Cllr Landell Mills, seconded by Cllr Roz Smith proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note, and accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Hayes and the amendment proposed by Cllr Wolff

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion as amended was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council welcomes the public discussions which are taking place in this city about the value of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in encouraging walking and cycling, preventing rat-running, and decreasing air pollution, while also having the positive effect of opening up residential and shopping streets for local communities, supporting local businesses and boosting community ties. This ongoing discussion is informed by successful LTNs in Waltham Forest, Groeningen in the Netherlands and Ghent in Belgium.

Council supports the efforts of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets (OLS) and the motion proposed by County Councillors John Sanders and Damian Haywood and passed unanimously by Oxfordshire County Council on 14 July 2020 to back Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and introduce them when and where feasible.

Nationwide there is a debate about LTNs. LTNs may create differences of views in a diverse city such as Oxford. In a democracy, we can all air our views and, through the pressing of points, deepening of understanding, and forging of consensus, we can

ensure that LTNs are introduced in the right way in the right places. That way change can be lasting and widely supported.

This Council notes that Tranche 1* money received by the County Council was half of that expected due in part to the lack of ambition and because of:

- The Department for Transport explicitly saying that bolder T1 proposals would win larger sums of funding, leading to the implication that less ambitious T1 proposals would win smaller sums of funding. Oxfordshire did not receive its entitlement because the schemes of the County Council were not sufficiently ambitious about meaningful change or reallocation of road space.
- Short timescales for the preparation and submission of a bid, although many other local authorities were awarded a full allocation of funding, with some receiving even more (for example, Bucks and Central Bedfordshire receiving 112% of their funding allocation).
- The rural focus of the County Council's T1 bid when the Department for Transport sought to fund areas capable of making tangible changes. This requirement should have led the County Council to focus on the transport needs of urban areas such as Oxford City.

The County Council Tranche 2 bid is more ambitious with LTNs for the St Mary's, St Clements, Divinity Road, Old Headington, New Headington, Quarry, Jericho and Walton Manor areas.

This Council therefore commits

1. to encourage local residents' groups and elected members in their efforts to engage communities in discussion about LTNs, so that they may be designed to get the main benefits without imposing unreasonable, adverse consequences. Local people know their streets better than anyone else and must be able to shape their communities. Consultation should precede the introduction of LTNs;
2. to support further studies and consultation to develop LTNs as an evidence-based and democratic approach. The benefits of transportation changes should not be conferred upon one community at the expense of any other;
3. to continue to encourage the County Council as transport authority to fund schemes including LTNs;
4. to continue to encourage the County Council to submit funding requests to national Government to deliver LTNs and related transportation changes.
5. to provide clear guidance to Councillors on the use of ward member CIL funds to support LTN scheme design and implementation.

e) Going wild

Cllr Henwood, seconded by Cllr Goddard proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note, and accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Linda Smith.

On being put to the vote without debate the motion as amended was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Managed Wildlife corridors are an important means of preserving and developing bio-diversity in towns and cities and there is the potential in Oxford to create more of these important habitats.

Council resolves to work with stakeholders and partners including schools, colleges, Universities, community centres and Parish Councils to convert verges into wildlife habitats where possible.

Members of the council give their thanks to the council officers and ODS staff who have worked on proposals for increasing biodiversity in the city, these proposals include the possibility of less frequent mowing of some verges as well as the creation of additional wildlife areas in our parks and open spaces.

This Council notes that these proposals involve additional expenditure and are being considered as part of the 2021/2022 budget setting process.

This Council requests that the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks continues to work with officers, local councillors, residents, park user groups and other interested local community groups to improve biodiversity in our city.

f) A consistent definition of net zero buildings

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

g) Government Proposals for Planning Reform

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

h) Planning system and undermining of Local Democracy

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

i) Chinese New Year 2021

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

j) Liveable Streets initiative

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

k) Domestic Abuse and Covid-19 workplace and community safety

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

l) Carbon targets

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 30 November 2020

*Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:
Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision
and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.
Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

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To: Council
Date: 5 October 2020
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader,

Republished after the meeting to include supplementary questions and answers

Introduction

1. Questions submitted by members of Council to the Cabinet members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.
2. Responses are included where available.
3. Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the councillor answering the original question.
4. This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.
5. Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

Questions and responses

Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing and Housing the Homeless

1. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Rowley – Rough sleeping rise

Question

Following the virtual ending of rough sleeping in the City during the early weeks of the Covid crisis (following the provision of emergency

Written Response

The numbers of rough sleepers have been consistently in the mid 20's since the beginning of May. The work we have undertaken with partners as part of the "Everyone In" initiative means that the data we have on people rough sleeping, and their

1. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Rowley – Rough sleeping rise

support from Government), we are now sadly seeing rising numbers. This is presumably not, at this stage, due to increases in evictions (court proceedings having only re-started on 21st September).

What is the cause and what is the portfolio holder doing to get numbers of rough sleepers back down and get people the support they need?

circumstances is better than ever before. We now report weekly figures of rough sleepers to the Ministry of Housing, and our last reported figure was 25.

There are 12 people who have rejected offers of accommodation. The majority of the remainder are new rough sleepers waiting to be placed in accommodation. The main cause of people becoming homeless is relationship or family breakdown. Other causes are the breakdown of shared living arrangements, and people leaving prison. The council has secured the use of YHA until March 2021, and Canterbury House until July 2021, a total of 118 units, which means that there are accommodation offers for people who are rough sleeping. Where these have been rejected, the ST Mungo's outreach team continue to engage with people to try and find accommodation solutions.

2. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Rowley – Rough sleeping count

Question

Can the Portfolio Holder please provide the most recent street count of rough sleepers?

When is the next street count scheduled?

Written Response

The first street count since the lockdown was undertaken in the early hours of 23rd September, and 23 rough sleepers were identified.

The next count will be the official annual street count which will be undertaken in November.

Cabinet Member for City Centre, Covered Market and Culture

No questions

Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services

| 3. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Chapman – Repairs to Queen Street | |
|--|---|
| <p>Question</p> <p>Repairs to Queen Street, undertaken by the Westgate Alliance management, commenced on 21 September.</p> <p>a) Why were repairs needed so soon after the street was made ready for bus and pedestrian travel in October 2017, and</p> <p>b) will the City be responsible for any of the cost of these repairs and,</p> <p>c) if so, what will that cost be?</p> | <p>Written Response</p> <p>Laing O’Rourke, the main contractor for the Westgate development, are responsible for Queen Street as it has not yet gained Highway Adoption sign off and was part of their works area.</p> <p>ODS were not involved in the original work, it was completed by one of Laing O’Rourke’s contractors.</p> <p>ODS have been asked, in their trading capacity, to work for Laing O’Rourke and to reduce the camber on the road and re-lay the paving slabs. It is believed that the camber combined with the bus traffic across this area has caused the damage to the paving construction.</p> <p>Laing O’Rourke are funding all remedial works, this is part of their contract. They had to pay a bond to the County Council at the start of the project and will not have it refunded until highway adoption sign off has been achieved.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, are responsible for adoptions. Following Highway adoption sign off by the County, ODS will become responsible for the maintenance of these areas under the 101 Agreement. At present we do not know when this will be as it depends on when County sign off has been achieved.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Will the City Council have any input into the County Council’s decision as to when to sign off the highway adoption? This shouldn’t be until we are certain we have a safe and long lasting highway on Queen Street, which doesn’t seem to be the case now.</p> | <p>Verbal Response</p> <p>This Council wouldn’t take responsibility for maintenance on any roads where we were not content that they were of sufficient standard. It is the County Council as Highways Authority who are responsible for adoptions, but we have to agree to take on the maintenance. So there will be a constructive dialogue about the standard of this stretch of highway before we take over responsibility.</p> |

4. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Turner – Commercial property investment budget

Question

Has Council now finally abandoned its 2020 budget plans, labelled by the Greens at the time as ‘crazy’, to invest £60m in commercial property?

Written Response

Any changes to spend on commercial property will be consulted upon as part of the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5. From Councillor Roz Smith to Councillor Turner – City car park business rate costs

Question

How much does each city council owned car park cost in business rates??

Written Response

Below is a list of the rated car parks:

| Car Park | RV | Gross Rate | Notes |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---|
| Oxpens Road | £630,000 | £322,560 | <i>Will decrease soon when platform is re-located</i> |
| Worcester Street | £450,000 | £230,400 | |
| Gloucester Green | £312,500 | £160,000 | <i>Includes Bus Station, Market Stalls, Mgmt Areas and Public Toilets</i> |
| Redbridge Park & Ride | £218,000 | £111,616 | |
| <i>Thornhill Park & Ride</i> | <i>£152,000</i> | <i>£76,608</i> | <i>Payable to SODC</i> |
| Peartree Park & Ride | £134,000 | £68,608 | |
| Seacourt Park & Ride | £114,000 | £58,368 | |
| Worcester Street Overflow | £63,000 | £32,256 | |
| Old High Street, Headington | £60,000 | £30,720 | |

5. From Councillor Roz Smith to Councillor Turner – City car park business rate costs

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--|
| Banbury Road | £58,000 | £29,696 | |
| St Clements | £48,000 | £20,958.66 | |
| Court Place Farm | £43,500 | £21,706.50 | |
| Ferry Pool Road | £39,500 | £19,710.50 | |
| Union Street (Cowley Road) | £29,500 | £14,720.50 | |
| St Leonards Road | £23,500 | £11,726.50 | |
| Walton Well Road | £13,500 | £5,056.09 | |
| Alexandra Courts Recreation Ground | £13,000 | £4,905.17 | |
| Hinksey Park | £10,000 | £4,990 | |
| Ferry Hinksey Road Recreation Ground | £5,600 | £2,641.24 | |
| | TOTAL | £1,227,247.16 | |

Other car parks are both attached to parks and are free of charge are exempt as a park amenity.

Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford; non-statutory Deputy Leader

6. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Hayes – Natural Capital initiative

| Question | Written Response |
|---|--|
| At its meeting on 22 July 2019 this council confirmed its commitment to the government's initiative to assess Natural Capital in our county, and offered to act as a pilot. | Officers wrote to Defra Ministers to offer Oxford as a pilot location. A reply from Rebecca Pow MP, at that time Parliamentary Under Secretary of State was forwarded to Cllrs Goddard and Landell-Mills on 7 November 2019. At the time the advice was that the Minister would ensure that the offer was "kept in sight by Defra officials, |

| 6. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Hayes – Natural Capital initiative | |
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| Can the Cabinet member update Council on actions arising from this resolution? | as they advise in future on this very important initiative”. I have asked officers to forward the reply that was sent to Councillors. In July, a £5m pilot on establishing a new Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment was announced, officers are exploring that fund and others to further boost biodiversity work in Oxford. The City Council has also submitted a response to the Draft England Tree Strategy consultation in September 2020. |

| 7. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Hayes – Tranche 2 transport schemes | |
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| <p>Question</p> <p>Were city council cabinet members or city officers consulted before the county submitted its proposals for tranche 2 transport schemes in the city?</p> <p><i>Emergency active travel fund: Funding allocations for emergency active travel schemes for local authorities in the region of the United Kingdom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</i></p> <p><i>tranche 1 supports the installation of temporary projects for the COVID-19 pandemic</i></p> <p><i>tranche 2 the creation of longer-term projects</i></p> | <p>Written Response</p> <p>Neither city council members nor officers were involved in the development, drafting, or sign off of the Tranche 2 bid.</p> <p>City council cabinet members were not consulted at any point. Officers were shown an outline presentation of the County Council’s emerging thinking for Tranche 2 on 30th July 2020, but on a confidential basis as it had not yet been shared widely with County members.</p> <p>The County Council did not share the final bid document with City Council prior to its submission.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>It is less than ideal that neither councillors nor officer were involved in preparing these bids.</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member have preferred it if there were more involvement?</p> | <p>Verbal Response</p> <p>Yes, we would and we have made that point in our regular meetings and in writing to the County Council’s Cabinet member. Her response, understandably, is that it is very difficult to include the city council given tight deadlines and very little time to prepare these bids. I don’t think that’s quite a sufficient rationale but I do appreciate their problem.</p> |

| 8. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hayes – Tranche 2 Active Travel Grant bid | |
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| <p>Question</p> <p>Does the portfolio holder think it is acceptable that I had to resort to a Freedom of Information request to get Oxfordshire County Council to release a copy of the Tranche 2 Active Travel Grant bid?</p> | <p>Written Response</p> <p>No. We are deeply concerned by the County Council administration’s refusal to engage members, let alone consult them. We make this point repeatedly and would welcome it being acted upon. This concern about the lack of engagement extends to members in this City Council and members elected to the County Council itself.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Do you now have a copy of the final bid?</p> | <p>Verbal Response</p> <p>Yes, I do.</p> |

| 9. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Cowley | |
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| <p>Question</p> <p>I have campaigned for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Cowley.</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder explain why this scheme which is a collaboration between the City and County Council hasn’t been delivered on time or when the scheme will be delivered?</p> | <p>Written Response</p> <p>The County Council, as highway authority, is proposing several Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in Oxford.</p> <p>These have come forward as a result of local neighbourhood campaigning - and have been included in the County Council’s, Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) Tranche 1 work and within the subsequent Tranche 2 bid.</p> <p>The City Council supports the principle of liveable streets and the inclusion of some low traffic neighbourhood measures. However, we have not been involved in the development of these specific schemes.</p> <p>The City Council believes that consistent and extensive engagement and consultation with the public and stakeholders (including businesses and schools) is essential for the success of transport schemes. We will continue to emphasise this message to the County Council.</p> |

10. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood consultation

Question

During the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhood consultation local businesses and schools were not consulted, can I seek reassurance that the city council portfolio holder will urge county council counterparts to proactively seek the advice from local businesses and schools on how best to introduce the scheme?

Written Response

The County Council, as highway authority, is proposing several Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in Oxford.

These have come forward as a result of local neighbourhood campaigning - and have been included in the County Council's, Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) Tranche 1 work and within the subsequent Tranche 2 bid.

The City Council supports the principle of liveable streets and the inclusion of some low traffic neighbourhood measures. However, we have not been involved in the development of these specific schemes.

The City Council believes that consistent and extensive engagement and consultation with the public and stakeholders (including businesses and schools) is essential for the success of transport schemes. We will continue to emphasise this message to the County Council.

11. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hayes – Climate emergency actions

Question

Now that the majority of Councillors on Scrutiny Committee decided not to continue with the Climate Emergency Review Group, what is happening to the recommendations made by the Group last year and what plans are there to continue with this workstream?

(the Review Group only had time to look at buildings last year)?

Written Response

I want to place on record, again, the Council's warm thanks to Scrutiny Committee for establishing the Review Group and the members of the Group for their contributions to the Review. A significant amount of care, thought, and time was dedicated to the conclusion of the 59 cross-party recommendation of the Scrutiny Review Group and we want to ensure that each one is properly considered. That process is underway.

I shared the view with the Review Group at the time that the Council would benefit from aligning the various strands of activity taking place to address Oxford's climate emergency response. The Citizens' Assembly produced exceptionally useful insights which formed the basis of a December 2019 Cabinet response which, in turn, informed the commitments of the first budget to follow the declaration of the climate emergency. The Scrutiny Review Group has identified a number of recommendations. Work is ongoing to address the causes of the 99% of emissions in our city. To the

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| 11. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hayes – Climate emergency actions | |
| | <p>greatest extent, I want the Scrutiny Review Group’s recommendations to join up with existing work-streams, so that the sustainability of those recommendations can be guaranteed.</p> <p>Our intent is to produce a response to the Review Group’s recommendations by mid-November, in order that proper consideration has been given to them and that alignment of work-streams can take place.</p> |

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| 12. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hayes – electric cars | |
| Question | Written Response |
| <p>In a previous budget, the Greens suggested that the Council invested in the purchase of long range electric cars that could be made available to residents and community groups via existing – or new - car sharing schemes generating a reasonable financial return.</p> <p>Although, this idea was rejected at the time, does the portfolio holder agree that it is now worth re-visiting given the urgent need to tackle air quality in the City as well as address the Climate Emergency?</p> <p>(Note that existing car clubs are investing in electric vehicles but they still make up only a small part of the fleet).</p> | <p>The Greens proposed a £0.3m investment in the City’s car sharing schemes (adding 10 long distance electric vehicles) at the Budget in February 2019. The proposal was declined at the time of the Budget because the City Council works with partners to promote car sharing social enterprises in the city, in particular Co-wheels Car Club. Indeed, a few month on from the Budget, Co-Wheels Car Club announced the addition of 100% electric BMW i3 4-door hatchbacks to be based at 10 locations across the city. With a range of up to 190 miles, the BMW i3 EVs are an ideal fit for those travelling around the city and further afield.</p> <p>The new EV roll out was part of the Go Ultra Low Oxford project, a government funded project run by Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to provide electric car charging points across the city which will power the vehicles. Some existing bays were switched from petrol to electric and there new on-street EV locations in Jericho and West Oxford were added.</p> <p>Oxford has more shared electric vehicles per head of population than any other UK city. The roll out of 10 new car club EVs on the city’s streets in 2019 meant that residents and visitors to Oxford have more opportunity to make their journeys in a zero-emission car than anywhere else in the country. This gives the Council confidence in our current approach of supporting social enterprises to do good and achieve our goals.</p> |

13. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Hayes – Westgate parking pricing

Question

There is considerable anecdotal evidence that many people choose to drive into Oxford city centre in order to park at Westgate because it is cheap, contributing to congestion in our city.

I understand that the Westgate management is required to take into account pricing at the city council's car parks in setting its own charges. A recent comparison with nearby Worcester St car park revealed that Westgate charges are significantly lower at every price-band, mostly around 2/3 of the rate charged at Worcester St, at some price-points as much as 50% lower.

Does the Cabinet member believe the Westgate centre is taking city pricing into account?

Can he itemize actions taken by the council to ensure that it is?

Written Response

There is a mechanism for an annual review of the car park management plan within the lease to Westgate.

Officers met with Westgate Alliance to undertake this in January 2020. At that point they informed the Council that they did not intend to increase charging at that point, but did stress that they review this position on an annual basis.

The agreement with Westgate Alliance states that they must have regard to Worcester Street Car Park charges and that the Council should be consulted should they make any changes to their tariff. We do not have direct control over the charges levied but we will be meeting to discuss and review their car park management plan again in January. This review will include the tariff levels.

While there is a price differential between the two car parks on the longer stay charging, the short stay tariffs are more comparable. If a customer is to park for up to an hour during the week, the charge at Worcester Street Car Park is £1 higher than that of Westgate. The evening charging is similarly aligned with the charge for the Westgate, being 50p less than that of Worcester Street for use mid-week, and £1 less on a Saturday or Sunday.

Supplementary Question

The differences may be small in monetary value but vary from 25% to 50% across different lengths of stay. What's the meaning of 'have regard' and what do we do to make sure the Westgate Alliance do 'have regard'?

Verbal Response

Routinely meeting with Westgate Alliance on different matters, including car parking, and at least once a year discussing tariffs at the annual review. The next review is in January and we will be making these points to them.

14. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Car Free Day

14. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Car Free Day

Question

What did the Council do to celebrate world car free day (Tues 22 September) this year?

Written Response

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a need to secure safe distancing between people and therefore to support active travel, this Council has been working with the transport authority Oxfordshire County Council to ensure more parts of the city can be spared vehicle traffic for more days of the year. During this time, we have been progressing plans to enhance air quality by targeting harmful emissions from transportation—this includes the setting of a new local target for air pollution. The Communications team has been working flat out – with more than 200 press releases and over 1,000 social media posts in the past 6 months as well as films, posters, leaflets and so on. This has reduced the team’s spare capacity to do anything specifically for this awareness-raising day, although we were able to mark other awareness raising days including World Environment Day in June, World Electric Vehicle Day earlier this month, and we will be celebrating Clean Air Day in October.

15. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – George Street pedestrianisation

Question

Can the portfolio holder please give us the results from the recent public questionnaire about the pedestrianisation of George Street and inform Council about the next steps?

Written Response

The public survey was published on 18th September 2020 and runs until 5th October 2020. The results will then need to be analysed and we will then publish the results. As such, I am not able to give you the results at this point in time.

A similar exercise is also underway capturing feedback from adjacent businesses and stakeholders, including the bus companies and taxis.

In terms of next steps. We will take this information, alongside costs and operational considerations, to inform a final evaluation and lessons learned report. This work will also set out how we can deliver similar projects in the future, working with the County Council and key partners, including the bus companies and taxis.

| 15.From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – George Street pedestrianisation | |
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| Supplementary Question Will the report be made available to councillors and the public? | Verbal Response Yes it can. An initial review of the 1000 or so responses shows strong support for reinstatement of pedestrianisation in George Street in warmer months, and for bus gates if these will lead to pedestrianisation. The hospitality sector was pleased with the benefits of the scheme. There is overall a positive response to the pilot and more support for transport changes which would support it. |

| 16.From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes –e-scooters | |
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| Question Given the rapid rise of e-scooters on the streets of Oxford, can the portfolio holder please inform Council of the current legal status of e-scooters and progress on the promised trials? | Written Response Since July 2020, the legal status of privately-owned e-scooters is different from the legal status of e-scooters which are part of an approved hire scheme. Private e-scooters cannot legally be used on the public highways. They can only be used on private land. E-scooters rented as part of an approved hire scheme can be legally used on the road. The County Council, as the highways authority, is undertaking a procurement exercise for an approved e-scooter hire operator as part of the process mandated by Department for Transport. The City Council is a key stakeholder in this trial, for example we hosted the County Council and their preferred operator at a session of the inclusive transport and movement focus group. However, the City Council has no formal role in the licensing of the scheme. The County Council will communicate the outcome of the procurement exercise and nature of the proposed trial in due course. |

| 17.From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hayes – Aristotle Bridge repairs | |
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| Question Could the Cabinet Member confirm that discussions are underway with Network Rail about urgent remedial work to the ramp from Aristotle bridge into Port Meadow, where the underpinning shale structure is collapsing? | Written Response This is a County Council matter, as the highways authority. A similar question was raised at the County Council’s 17 September 2020 meeting “Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Environment”. Cllr Constance’s response was an inspection will be carried out and |

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| 17. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hayes – Aristotle Bridge repairs | |
| | County will liaise with Network Rail as appropriate. |
| Supplementary Question Would it be possible for officers to write to Cllr Constance to ask if the inspection has now happened and if the County Council's is liaising with Network Rail to push this forward? | Verbal Response I have written to Cllr Constance about this and will share the response when I receive it. |

Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks

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| 18. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Linda Smith – Signs in Cutteslowe Park | |
| Question Could the Cabinet Member advise where negotiations have reached for the provision and placing of signs for the Charterville Horticultural Therapy Nursery and Garden Centre in Cutteslowe Park? | Written Response We are looking at installing signposts by the end of the financial year which have not been historically replaced. This is to help guide visitors to points of interest within the park. |

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| 19. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Linda Smith – Tree planting activity | |
| Question Am I correct in understanding that the Council has paused its tree planting efforts including its work with community groups due, apparently, to coronavirus restrictions? Given the importance of tree-planting, and the fact that this outdoor activity can be conducted by small groups that are socially distanced, would the portfolio agree to re-consider this decision? | Written Response Tree planting has not been paused we are looking to plant over 100 trees this year during November. Maintenance to the existing community tree planting projects (Sunnymead, Croft Road and Rose Hill) went ahead during the summer. We are planning on carrying out additional planting at King George's Meadow and potentially Court Place Farm. This is all subject to COVID guidelines on social distancing. |

| 19.From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Linda Smith – Tree planting activity | |
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| Supplementary Question I did have an email which I will pass on to you, from a resident forwarding an email from an officer stating they were pausing tree planting | Verbal Response Thank you – I will look into this. |

| 20.From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Linda Smith – Verge cutting | |
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| Question Given that one consolation during full lockdown was the degree to which grass verges in the city -- an important habitat for wild flowers, insects, and other wildlife -- thrived, does the cabinet member agree that a light-touch approach to cutting back verges is to be preferred and should be the city's policy from now on? | Written Response Verge cutting was indeed significantly reduced at the outset of lockdown and has gradually returned to normal service levels. I've been working with officers from the council and ODS over the past few months to examine possible changes to our grass cutting policies for both verges and designated areas within parks which would have a positive impact on biodiversity. I hope that these proposals will be brought forward in the forthcoming budget cycle. |
| Supplementary Question Will the proposed changes to the grass cutting regime be introduced and in place before the next major growing season? | Verbal Response Yes |

| 21.From Councillor Wade to Councillor Linda Smith – Cutteslowe Park cricket nets | |
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| Question Could the Cabinet Member advise whether the City Council is making a contribution and, if so, how much to the cost of cricket nets at Cutteslowe Park? What is Sport England's contribution? | Written Response The Council have supported Wolvercote Cricket Club in developing a project to deliver new cricket nets at Cutteslowe park to support the growth and development of Cricket at the site. As land owner for the site we have supported the clubs application to Sport England for funding of £20,000 towards the project with the remaining costs |

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| 21. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Linda Smith – Cutteslowe Park cricket nets | |
| | <p>being funded through the clubs fund raising. The project has no cost to the Council but will be a significant improvement in the sporting facilities at the site.</p> <p>We have supported initial consultation on the location of the new facilities in conjunction with the club, local members and key stakeholders for the park. The club are anticipating putting forward a planning application within the next two weeks.</p> |

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| 22. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Linda Smith – Port Meadow clean up costs | |
| <p>Question</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member advise what additional costs have been incurred in clearing rubbish and for other management duties at Port Meadow from the Easter weekend: 11 April 2020 to the present date?</p> | <p>Written Response</p> <p>Approximately £3000 of additional costs have been incurred mostly associated with additional overtime and additional waste containers and their servicing. Further resources have been provided without additional cost through the redirection of staff from within the service onto Port Meadow. Some staff also volunteered to work additional hours during the weekend to monitor the situation and I'd like to thank them on behalf of the council for their hard work and commitment to keeping Port Meadow beautiful for us all to enjoy.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Thank you to all the council and ODS staff who have been extraordinary in the amount of work they have done:</p> <p>Do we have a plan to continue the work on a sounder basis rather than relying on the goodwill and efforts of individual officers to police this?</p> | <p>Verbal Response</p> <p>We have a plan based on the multi agency working which was successful in dealing with the problems over this summer. We will reconvene this in time to for next summer</p> <p>I commend the work of the various volunteer groups including the Wolvercote Wombles, and well done to all the staff and volunteers for their work.</p> |

Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery

23. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Carbon neutral development

Question

The shadow chancellor recently announced that in the case of any new housing developments the Labour party would not build new developments contributing to an increase in carbon.

Will the local Labour leadership take a carbon neutral approach when planning new developments?

Written Response

As the councillor has been unable to provide a reference for this ‘announcement’ beyond saying it was ‘on an interview on the TV’ it has proved difficult to clarify to what exactly the question refers. The Shadow Chancellor has made a number of announcements on the need for Government policy to improve carbon standards, and for any Government policy or programme to be clear about whether it contributes to increasing or reducing the level of carbon emissions overall. I am sure that everyone would agree that it is imperative that the Government does exactly that, and prioritises investment in transforming the entire economy to one that reflects the urgent necessity to reduce carbon emissions from all sources.

The City Council has already committed to policies in its Local Plan and in the business plan for Oxford City Homes that go considerably beyond national standard for minimising carbon in developments, and aims to continue to do so while balancing the needs for providing desperately needed social and affordable housing.

24. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Carbon neutral evidence

Question

When announcing low-carbon schemes such as new developments, charging points, will these provide evidence that the scheme is indeed low-carbon and provide evidence to justify the statement?

Written Response

Whenever the Council issues a statement about anything, included low-carbon schemes, the details are carefully checked by both the relevant departmental officers and the press team for accuracy. To suggest otherwise is to impugn their professionalism and integrity.

For new build developments the Local Plan sets out our aspirations in Oxford and evidence is required throughout the planning process. Planners work with

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| 24. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Carbon neutral evidence | |
| | specialist advisors to determine whether the evidence base meets the criteria. If the Councillor has any concerns about a specific statement, it would be helpful if he were to raise that with the appropriate officers. |

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| 25. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Littlemore Priory | |
| Question I have asked many times for the report detailing the works that have been carried out on the priory in Littlemore. When will I and other interested parties receive this report? | Written Response The councillor was sent the report on 17 September. |
| Supplementary Question Can I check that the planning enforcement criteria have been met and the work has been finished on this? | Verbal Response I will ask officers to provide a written answer on this to Cllr Henwood and the ward councillors? |

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| 26. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Rhodes statue at Oriel College | |
| Question Can we have an update on the Rhodes statue at Oriel college? When is the planned removal of the statue? | Written Response As part of a listed building, listed building consent is required for the removal of the statue. No listed building consent request has yet been submitted by the College to date. It was widely reported in the media that Oriel College has appointed a Panel to advise them, and that they will wait for that Panel to report before submitting the application. |

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| 27. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt parking costs |
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| 27. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt parking costs | |
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| Question Following the recent, and repeated, cost increases the construction of the Seacourt Park and Ride extension (which, by my reckoning, now exceeds £6m), can the portfolio holder please let Council know the latest cost per parking space created and the expected payback period? | Written Response The cost per parking space created is £9,028, and the total cost is £5.376m. The payback period remains 17 years, as per the Cabinet report of 12 June 2019, which is based on the assumption that there are inflationary increases to car parking charges. |
| Supplementary Question The cost per parking space is over £9k: how does that compare to the cost per space in a normal surface car park? | Verbal Response This will be answered in writing. |

| 28. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt P&R completion | |
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| Question Could the Cabinet Member give a date for completion of the Seacourt Park & Ride extension, and advise whether any further costs are anticipated beyond the additional £225,000 agreed in August? | Written Response Completion of the car park is anticipated for 30 October 2020, and no additional costs are anticipated beyond the £220,000 agreed by Cabinet in August. |
| Supplementary Question Please can the Cabinet Member let councillors know if there are any additional costs? | Verbal Response Noted. |

| 29. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – Barton house prices | |
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| Question Does the portfolio holder agree with residents (as reported in the Oxford Mail) that £1.1m for a new house on previously | Written Response The councillor appears to fundamentally misunderstand the entire basis of the Barton Park scheme, which is that it is a mixed development where the sale of some of the housing on the open market pays for the infrastructure costs of making the development possible, providing the |

29. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – Barton house prices

Council-owned land in Barton, by a joint venture between Oxford City Council and Grosvenor is 'staggering' and will do little to help solve the City's dire housing crisis?

school and other facilities that make the development a community not a dormitory, and above all pay for the costs of the social housing. Without the market housing, there would be no scheme, and no social housing. The two are inextricably linked.

The site of Barton Park was first safeguarded for future development and then allocated for development in successive Local Plans, followed by a detailed Area Action Plan which was initiated in 2009. At that time the then Homes and Communities Agency, the government body to support housing development, was heavily involved and was assumed to be a potential source of grant funding for the development of the site.

However, following the change of Government in 2010 the Homes and Communities Agency's budget was severely reduced, and it indicated that while it remain supportive of the scheme in principle, there would be no funding support.

The first stages of the AAP were also completed by late 2010 along with work on potential development models, including initial assessments of the costs of developing the site. These **estimates** (which were heavily caveated, and which are using 2010 prices) included costs of £22.2m for infrastructure, in particular works on land remediation, drainage, the road junction at the A40, and relocation of power lines from the substation, and £14.7m for s106 requirements, including for the new primary school, off-site education contributions, and on and off-site leisure and community facilities. These enabling works would need to be largely completed, or the funds transferred to the County Council, before the development of housing on the site could be started.

At the City Executive Board meeting on 10 November 2010 the results of this work were published in a report on the public agenda, showing that the costs of developing the site were greater than the funds that would be available. As a result the AAP removed the requirement for intermediate housing from the planning policy requirement for the site, while retaining the requirement for 40% of the site to be social housing, as elsewhere in the city.

The report also explained the development options available: as the Council was barred from borrowing within the Housing Revenue Account at that time, an 'in-house' option would have involved the Council attempting to borrow very substantial sums through the General Fund, and taking on the entire risk of the project

29. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – Barton house prices

itself. Even if had such a degree of borrowing been allowed by the then Government – which might be considered unlikely - the degree of risk to the rest of the Council’s services was considered to be too great by the officers writing the report at the time.

As a result the recommendation was to proceed with a joint venture, where the risks of additional costs arising would be shared with a financing partner – in effect, in relation to this site the Council was land-rich and cash-poor, and therefore looked for a partner who was able to able to provide the financing in exchange for taking on the bulk of the risk of the scheme. The agreement with that partner included an objective that any return to the Council above that anticipated could, if the Council so wished, be reinvested in the provision of additional social or affordable housing.

The total costs of the infrastructure, s106 and so forth that made up the enabling works that allowed the development to go forward are between £50m and £60m, in today’s prices.

However, it is crucial to understand that the basis of ANY scheme for taking Barton Park forward, once the HCA confirmed that no grant funding would be made available, was one where houses sold on the open market would generate the funds necessary to build the infrastructure, the school and community facilities. Irrespective of the model chosen, without the market housing, the scheme would not have happened.

So in summary, since the sale of market housing at Barton Park has already delivered nearly 100 new council houses, along with a new school, park, leisure facilities and open space, and will deliver another nearly 300 council houses. It is simply false to suggest otherwise.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the answer. What steps has the Council taken to communicate and promote the explanations in this answer to the press and public – has it been communicated effectively and could we do this better?

Verbal Response

We do take steps to publicise and explain this but it is something that can often be misunderstood. Journalists have been scrupulously accurate; the editorial column can stray into rhetoric; the real difficulty lies in the below-the-line comments which can misinterpret the facts. Councillors of this council can and do take a role in that debate.

Officers, the press team and Cabinet Members will continue to try to explain the facts behind these figures.

30. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – Barton Park viability and pricing

| Question | Written Response |
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| <p>Did the viability assessment for Barton, which established the level of affordable housing on the site assume that the private homes would be on the market for the sorts of sums now being advertised?</p> | <p>The viability assessment uses 2010 prices for both construction costs and potential values. The values for market housing on the site in 2010 prices are at about £250-255 per square foot, with some variance by size of dwelling, while the social housing valued at £127 per square foot. As noted in the answer to the earlier question infrastructure construction costs were higher in price terms, but in line with real prices given the rates of infrastructure price inflation over the last decade. Similarly construction costs, and house price indices for both market and social housing have changed, with market housing increasing more than social housing. While a specific index for the OX3 postcode doesn't exist estimates for Oxford show an increase in house prices over the period since 2010 of around 70%. Based on estate agents' particulars for floorspace, a typical detached house sold on the open market has a square footage valuation of around £435, which is 72.5% higher than the equivalent value in the viability assessment. Given the margins for error in any estimate, particularly one 10 years old, it would appear that the viability assessment assumptions for market housing were reasonable.</p> |

Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford

31. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Upton – Covid19 public safety powers

| Question | Written Response |
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| <p>The Chief Executive has been given special powers to close premises that do not comply with social distancing or other emergency measures to secure public safety.</p> <p>Has the Chief Executive introduced such measures?</p> | <p>The County Council have delegated powers to the City Council to issue directions to close premises, outdoor places or events if there is a serious and imminent threat to public health. These powers have been approved and accepted by the City Council. The powers have not yet been needed by the City Council and the Director of Public Health has not requested their use.</p> |

31. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Upton – Covid19 public safety powers

Supplementary Question

Have officers have made any recommendation to the Chief Executive to close any premises?

Verbal Response

I am not aware of any such recommendations and I am sure I would be. The motion later in the agenda deals with reporting Covid-related matters to councillors: getting reports to you on how such decisions are taken is one such matter which could be included.

32. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Upton – Bike thefts

Question

What is the portfolio holder doing about the recent rise in bike thefts?

(Cllr Wolff thanked Cllr Upton for her answer and the actions)

Written Response

Most crimes are rising following lockdown ending and we do recognise that Oxford has one of the highest bike theft rates in the country. That is why we set up the Bike Crime Partnership which includes the University and British Transport Police, as well as representatives from the cycling community.

We are encouraging cycling through additional racks and are making it safer by patrols, bike registration and more CCTV.

We encourage bike owners to mark their bikes using a national bike registration scheme.

The Council also carries out a huge amount of work to keep abandoned/fly-parked bikes off the racks.

The East Oxford Safer Streets project (TVP funded) will invest up to £500,000 in bike theft reduction activities in East Oxford which will have a significant impact on bike theft. I have had discussions about this with the relevant police officers.

Finally, last week I personally cut overgrown ivy off a number of bike stands on Parks Road.

33. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Upton – Antisocial activity

Question

Where there are ongoing problems with persistent antisocial and illegal behaviour by groups of street dwellers in

Written Response

I wish there were quick and easy answers, but there are not. However, there is no failure here: all the agencies involved work together to deal with complex cases involving vulnerable people where

33. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Upton – Antisocial activity

particular parts of the city, the various agencies (various Council departments, police, property owners) involved seem unable to deal with this effectively. Could we have an explanation for this collective failure to promptly address these concerns?

(Cllr Wolff thanked Cllr Upton for her answer and reaffirming the email address to use)

there is no simple solution. Officers try to support people into accommodation or to help with addiction problems, whilst working with the Police to bring a prosecution when anti-social behaviour is impacting on local communities.

Worried residents should always email saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk

Concerns are triaged and the correct agencies - be that the Council's antisocial behaviour team, the police, the Council's housing team or our homeless outreach service - will be involved. It can also help us build up an evidence base if a prosecution is appropriate.

Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities

34. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Tidball – Racially motivated incidents

Question

The Councillor for Hinksey Park ward will be well aware of the racially-motivated attack on Wytham Street.

I thank her and Cllr Donnelly for acting promptly.

What actions are being taken following this incident and, more generally, are there any wider learnings or issues Councillors need to be aware of?

Written Response

The council is absolutely committed to tackling racism in all forms in Oxford and to celebrating difference and championing diversity in our city and as such will support all those experiencing racially motivated injustice or attacks.

In terms of the incident referred to, I can't disclose specific details at this time as there is an on-going criminal investigation but I can assure you the police are taking the matter very seriously and have taken prompt action against the individual concerned. In response to this incident, I have helped to set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the area.

More generally, this reinforces the importance of the work we are taking forward to increase trust and belonging between the Council and communities, based on inclusive values and reflecting the rich diversity in Oxford. This includes:

- Undertaking a strategic review of our

34. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Tidball – Racially motivated incidents

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|--|--|
| | <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy – this includes focus groups to understand lived experience and actions that the Council could take to promote race equality and diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launching an Anti-racism charter• Promoting and delivering a number of initiatives throughout October during Black History Month. |
|--|--|

Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships

35. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Brown – Oxford University’s record number of state-educated students

| Question | Written Response |
|---|--|
| <p>Will the portfolio holder join me in congratulating Oxford University for the record number of state-educated students in this year’s intake (68% of all undergraduates)</p> | <p>Yes. This improvement is very welcome and I know that the University is working to encourage increased access to young people from state schools. Nonetheless, this still shows a great over-representation of pupils from private schools who only make up 6.5% of pupils in the UK.</p> <p>More also needs to be done to ensure greater access for young people from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds including from state schools within our city. These issues are regularly raised in my discussions with the University and Colleges and we have encouraged them to expand their access programmes within the city. For example, we facilitated a twinning arrangement between New College and Wood Farm Primary school, a model which other colleges are now interested in replicating.</p> |

36. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Brown – BAME representation on the Cabinet

| 36. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Brown – BAME representation on the Cabinet | |
|--|---|
| <p>Question</p> <p>When was the last time a member from the BAME community served on the executive board of the Oxford City Council?</p> <p>Does the Leader agree with me that a member should serve on the executive board sooner rather than later?</p> | <p>Written Response</p> <p>Councillor Saj Malik served on the City Executive Board in 2010/2011.</p> <p>My view is that the Labour Group comprises excellent councillors who could - and many no doubt will - serve on the Cabinet. The ruling Labour Group reflects our local city quite well and I expect our Cabinet to do so in future. I have been working with colleagues in the Group to ensure this happens.</p> |

| 37. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Brown – ‘thank you’ Flag | |
|--|--|
| <p>Question</p> <p>As well as Key workers, groups and individuals during the pandemic have sacrificed and contributed much to our community.</p> <p>Will the portfolio holder consider commissioning a ‘Thank you’ flag to be flown from the town hall?</p> | <p>Written Response</p> <p>I will take this opportunity to again thank all the key workers in our city, retail staff, care workers, NHS workers and city council staff to name a few groups, who supported us through lockdown and continue to provide our vital services.</p> <p>It is not currently possible to fly flags as it is not possible to safely access the roof.</p> <p>In any case I think that the best way currently that we can thank all of those people is by following the rule of six and other national guidance and not spreading COVID-19.</p> <p>On a personal level, I visited our hubs and also ODS in order to thank people for the excellent work that they do.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>I like Oxford to be a welcoming city, and a thank you flag would send a clear message but accept the answer.</p> | <p>Verbal Response</p> <p>The Council and councillors have done quite a good job of thanking people in the city to date by other means, I’m not clear how people would recognise this flag, and more importantly due to safety and security concerns we are not able to fly flags at all so this is a slightly irrelevant issue.</p> |

38. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Brown – Localis sponsorship

Question

The think tank Localis is advertising on its website a research project into potential governance models for Oxford. The project is described as “sponsored by Oxford City Council”.

Could the Cabinet Member clarify the nature of this sponsorship, and any costs to the council?

Written Response

In the context of the impacts of Covid, Brexit and the government’s levelling up and devolution agendas, Localis is undertaking independent research looking at the case for place-led growth and renewal around Oxford. Part of the work will seek to understand priorities and views of local stakeholders and consider what more is needed from local governance to address them. This will inform our response to the forthcoming Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper. This work is also intended to complement the emerging City Economic Strategy, our work with Oxfordshire LEP and our position in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

The city council is providing £25,000 in sponsorship for the work which is being funded from within existing budgets.

<http://www.localis.org.uk/research/right-level-strategic-case-city-led-growth-innovation-renewal/>

39. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Brown – Local government reorganisation

Question

At the time of writing, the Government’s Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper promised this autumn has yet to be published.

Can the leader update Council on the likelihood that one or more authorities in the County are intending to make a submission to Government that will threaten the future of Oxford City Council, as currently constituted?

Written Response

Members will be aware of the recent PwC report commissioned by the County Council and Cherwell District Council which purported to be an analysis of options for local government reform in Oxfordshire. The City Council with West Oxfordshire District Council responded to this report highlighting that it is fundamentally flawed and based on misleading and inaccurate information (you can read our response online).

The City and other District Councils were not informed of or consulted on this work before it was commissioned and similarly have not been informed of any subsequent work underway on a submission to Government, though we are aware that other county councils in the country have been working on such submissions. This would be a question better asked of the County Council.

40. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Brown – Local government reorganisation 2

Question

The prospect of Local Government Reorganisation as part of the promised White Paper appears to have receded.

Does the Leader agree with me that this development puts the actions of the leadership of Oxfordshire County Council in an even worse light, having wasted large amounts of officer time and taxpayer money on a proposal which their party in government had no intention of pursuing, and even going as far as to seriously propose cancelling elections on the back of an initiative from this government which ended up being ditched in yet another screeching U-turn?

Written Response

We do not yet know what the content of the Devolution White Paper will be, but recent statements from Ministers as reported in the Local Government trade press suggest that the White Paper will not impose top down local government reorganisation and that any proposals will require strong and broad support across an area.

I would agree therefore that the County Council's actions were premature and have been disruptive and wasted significant time and resources of both County council staff and of the City and Districts. I will continue to put the case that our top priority must be to focus all our efforts on supporting residents and businesses through the COVID crisis and supporting recovery of the local economy and not allow that focus to be distracted by hasty and divisive arguments about reorganisation.

I also agree with Cllr Gant that the outrageous attempt by the Leader of the County Council to abolish local elections was an anti-democratic move too far – fortunately stymied by concerted opposition. One might conclude that the Leader of the County Council had something to fear from local elections...

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To: Council

Date: 5 October 2020

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda.

1. Address by Clare Robertson – in support of motion 17a on Designated Bathing Water Status for the River Thames
2. Address by Liz Sawyer - Oxfordshire Liveable Streets in support of motions 17d and 17j
3. Address by Tim Jones and Dwayne John, Oxford African Caribbean MultiCultural Association
4. (a) Address by Tim Bearder – Oxford Green Belt and the Liberal Democrat motion at item 17h
4. (b) Address by Andrew Heaver – Oxford Green Belt and the Liberal Democrat motion at item 17h
5. Address in support of motion 17k on Domestic abuse and Covid 19 workplace and community safety
6. Address by Colin Aldridge - Vagrancy act of 1824
7. Address by Magdalene Sacranie - The Charter for Compassion

1. Address by Clare Robertson – in support of motion 17a on Designated Bathing Water Status for the River Thames

Good evening chair and councillors. I'm speaking on behalf of over 3,300 people, mainly local residents, who support granting Designated Bathing Water Status for a stretch of the Thames through Oxford.

Why? Well, here in Oxford, we love our rivers: the Thames, or the Isis, the Cherwell, and the numerous streams that encircle and flow through our beautiful, ancient city.

These rivers are part of our daily lives. Residents of all ages, students, and visitors, walk, run and picnic alongside them, punt, paddle and row on them, and swim, play and fish in them. The river is the beating heart of our summer and provides exercise, fresh air, beauty and reflection throughout the whole year. During lockdown they have been a great source of solace and freedom.

Clean and healthy rivers provide humans and the wider ecosystem with numerous benefits, including much of the water we drink and wash with. This is especially true of the Thames Valley, where 80% of our tap water comes from rivers. Healthy rivers also fertilise the land and help prevent flooding, as well as being home to thousands of other species, from the kingfisher, otter and trout to dragonflies and water lilies.

Sadly, across England, our rivers are in a terrible state. A few weeks ago, Environment Agency figures showed that only 14% of rivers across the nation are in good ecological condition, and not a single river passed the chemical pollution standards [1]. This makes us one of the worst countries for water quality in Europe.

The major culprit for this national failure is raw sewage pollution. Data leaked to the Guardian newspaper revealed that in 2019 raw sewage was released into rivers over 200,000 times for over 1.5 million hours across England.

Locally, untreated sewage overflowed from four Oxford treatment works for nearly 2,000 hours in 2019. This is equivalent to 82 days of continuous overflow, or over 5 hours a day for every day of the year [3].

That is a national and local scandal. Legally, raw sewage overflow into rivers is only allowed at times of exceptionally heavy rainfall: otherwise, the sewage should go through at least three rounds of treatment to remove plastics and other solid waste, and micro-organisms harmful to human health. However, sewage treatment works are already overcapacity due to decades of underinvestment, so water companies ignore the law and regularly release sewage into rivers untreated [4]. The problem is worsened by lack of funding for, and enforcement by, the Environment Agency. There is also lack of transparency from the water companies: for instance, Thames Water has sensors installed on their sewage overflows and could provide real-time alerts of sewage pollution, but do not.

This is unacceptable. We deserve a healthy, clean river, safe for all to use and enjoy and for other species to live in. It's high time we ended sewage pollution in rivers.

Designated Bathing Water Status is an initial step towards this. It will enable the Environment Agency to carry out weekly water quality testing during the summer bathing season (between 15th May and 30th September) for harmful bacteria. The water quality will be rated from "excellent" to "poor", both annually and weekly. The information will be publicly available, with the council compelled to display it online and on signs, and give alerts when pollution levels are high.

This system is already in place for over 600 bathing waters around the UK - almost all are beaches, some are lakes, but there are no designated rivers. If we move quickly,

the Thames in Oxford could be one of the first three designated bathing rivers in the UK.

Designated Bathing Water Status will:

1. Enable swimmers and other river users to avoid river pollution and stay safe;
2. Pressure Thames Water to invest in upgrading the sewage system and treatment works upstream, increasing capacity so they no longer overflow during heavy rainfall. Making them fit for the 21st Century.

Back in the 90s, only 27% of beaches passed the minimum bathing water quality standards. A concerted effort by campaigners and local government forced the water companies to invest in improving their infrastructure. Now, 98% pass the minimum standards [5].

The same can, and should, happen for rivers. It's time to start treating our rivers as what they are - a beautiful and precious natural gift and resource, rather than an open sewer.

References:

1. Full dataset here <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/>, and article here <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/17/rivers-in-england-fail-pollution-tests-due-to-sewage-and-chemicals>

2. Environment Agency, Catchment Data Explorer, Thames (Evenlode to Thame) <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB106039030334>

3. Data extracted from the Rivers Trust "is your river fit to swim in?" map <https://www.riverstrust.org/what-we-do/is-your-river-fit-to-swim-in/>

Dataset for upper Thames here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Dd5drRA7e7FtXQpVcZJY6prc6aDloVrwBJhwoyJUJzc/edit?usp=sharing>

4. "Flushed Away: How sewage is still pollution the rivers of England and Wales" Report, WWF 2017 https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-12/Flushed%20Away_Nov2017.pdf

5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/bathing-water-quality-statistics>

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, Cllr Linda Smith, gave a verbal response during her proposal of the motion.

Summary

Thank you for your address and for your group's campaigning work on this issue and bringing it to our attention. I know you have held protests (flo –tests) and gathered 4000 signatures on your petition in support of this initiative.

The motion on the agenda tonight will start the process for designated bathing status, and your address makes an excellent case for us seeking this status. Thames Water's infrastructure requires major improvements but these won't happen unless we keep up the pressure on them to do so. The motion also seeks to do this and make sure we are at the front of the line for improvements, not just for bathers and swimmers but for all who enjoy being on or around our rivers.

This needs to be a group effort and we look forward to working with your group and others on this. Thank you very much for coming.

2. Address by Liz Sawyer - Oxfordshire Liveable Streets in support of motions 17d and 17j

Councillors, I am speaking to you today on behalf of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, in support of motions 17d and 17j, about the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and the Liveable Streets Initiative.

What exactly is the problem that these motions are addressing? Let me give you an example. We have all done it at some point. Stuck in immobile traffic, and running late to get to your meeting, appointment, or your mother, you reach for your phone and let Google solve your problem. And it does work, you leave the main road and are soon pootling along back streets and past people's houses until you re-join the main road, and you make it to your destination just about on time. No problem, huh?

Except that there is a problem. That secret solution that Google gave to you, Google also gave to every other person sitting in that traffic who reached for their phone in frustration. And whereas perhaps 10 years ago, only a few people had satnav and could make that spontaneous detour, today almost everyone with a phone will try it. And there are so many more cars now because of the growth of the city, those traffic jams are daily as opposed to occasional. So instead of turning smoothly back onto the main road at the end of your detour, you are now sitting in a line of 20 other cars along the length of that neighbourhood street, perhaps with local residents trying to cross the road in front of you or squeeze a bike past, waiting increasingly impatiently to turn back onto the main road and more likely to make a slightly dangerous manoeuvre to do so. And when you do turn back out, you are sitting behind the same car that you were when you left the main road, understandably more frustrated about being thwarted.

And this is the problem. That neighbourhood street now is blocked at rush hour most days with people trying to rush their cars through, the residents can't get their own cars out to get to work, and because of the traffic they feel the road is too dangerous to cross, especially if they are taking children to school or are elderly or disabled. And the street is noisy, polluted, and squashed, so who would want to walk or ride a bike along it? People who would otherwise choose to walk or cycle are forced to drive because it is too dangerous and unpleasant not to. It's a vicious cycle. It's caused by people who do not mean to cause a nuisance, but are simply trying to solve a problem not of their making. But the cumulative impact causes very real problems – ironically, more traffic: remember those people who can't walk through their neighbourhoods anymore? And this is before we mention those who live elsewhere, but used to walk or cycle through those quiet streets rather than drive, and who now can't find a safe, quiet unpolluted route any more. That neighbourhood street now has more air pollution, more noise, less space, which all make people less inclined to use it for walking, cycling, exercise, and even stopping for a chat with their neighbours. This contributes to rising social isolation, obesity, and decreased social mobility.

The solution is Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. They have already been employed in many areas around Oxford for decades, albeit not under that name. You will all know of grouped cul-de-sacs joined by alleyways, or streets with bollards or a gate at one end, or even just a street that leads straight onto a path, in your wards. These roads provide not just residents, but all others who need to pass through the area, with alternatives to the noisy, clogged main road. And if done right, if there are enough of these routes that they provide an attractive and safe continuous path from A to B around the city, they will actually tempt people out of their cars and into a more sustainable way of travelling, such as walking, running, riding a bike, or scooting. Each single car taken off the roads this way starts to slow that vicious circle and build a virtuous one instead, which truly does benefit everyone.

This problem of unusable residential streets is not the fault of any one person. It is simply a situation that has developed when normal people are faced with a lack of viable choices. It is your job as Councillors to face up to this situation, and take responsibility for creating the solution – low traffic neighbourhoods, or everyday roads with simple adaptations such as planters or bollards so that they meet the 10 very straightforward criteria of the Healthy Streets Indicators. That way you give people choice again, in this crowded but essential beautiful city, to travel in a way that has minimal impact on others. Because after all, people don't want to be a nuisance.

On behalf of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, and all the ordinary people who simply want a choice about how to travel, I ask you to support these two motions. Thank you.

Written response from the Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, Cllr Tom Hayes, supplemented with verbal response.

Thank you for joining Full Council today.

Like most cities around the world at this time, Oxford faces three distinct but related challenges: the long-known health challenge of air pollution and road safety, the present pandemic, and the future impacts of the climate emergency. The challenges can be met by particular policies and tools, and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) can play a role of some kind in meeting each.

We believe in healthy place-shaping—a principle and practice we are committed to as part of the Oxfordshire Growth Board. LTNs can facilitate healthy place-shaping, and we see 'healthy streets' as a tool for designing, consulting, implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of LTNs – this Council looks forward to working with County public health colleagues on this and we will seek to learn best practice from Transport for London colleagues.

We believe in the reduction of air pollution across Oxford. A 26% reduction in NO2 levels since 2013 provides a platform for further reductions. I would encourage you and other residents to have your say on the Council's new air quality action plan which sets out plans to go significantly further than the current legal target for air pollution to boost the health of people living and working in Oxford. LTNs can play a role in reducing air pollution by addressing emissions from private car use and reallocating road space to pedestrians and cyclists.

We believe in the strengthening of local communities. LTNs do not close residential streets, they help to open people's streets up like never before to residents, children, cyclists, and pedestrians. When neighbours can meet in the street to catch up, when children from different homes can play in the street they share and build friendships, local government is helping to create belonging, civic pride, and local patriotism.

Lastly, we face a climate emergency. Every member of this Council has voted for the declaration of a climate emergency and I am proud to serve with people who recognise the magnitude of the problem we face. At the time, citizens wrote in to councillors to say that they expected meaningful deeds to follow warm words, and this Council's record of action over the last year, building on a decade of progress, marked a response to this wish, Our Citizens' Assembly, held last year, called on councillors, government, and fellow citizens to do more, particularly in the realm of transport (with 16% of our carbon footprint arising from this sector). LTNs can help to reduce emissions which contribute to our climate emergency—this Council's support for the principle of LTNs is one more way in which our declarations and warm words can produce action which meets our climate emergency and builds the trust of citizens, rather than alienating them.

Nationwide there is a debate about LTNs. That is natural. LTNs may create differences of views. That is fine. In a diverse city, there will be differences of views on many issues and LTNs are one more example. In a democracy, we can all air our views and, through the pressing of points, deepening of understanding, and forging of consensus, we can ensure that LTNs are introduced in the right way in the right places. Consultation must precede the introduction of LTNs, so that people do not feel that change is forced upon them, but rather that they can be supported during any period of adjustment.

The City Council believes that consistent and extensive engagement and consultation with the public and all stakeholders is essential for the success of transport schemes, including LTNs. We continue to emphasise this message to the County Council, and in recent months, we have secured a temporary city centre bus gates consultation. We want to listen to people's concerns. People know their streets better than anyone else.

The overall success of LTNs relies on simultaneous traffic management and active travel improvements to arterial and radial routes. Otherwise the short-term impact of the LTNs will be increased congestion on the main roads. Therefore, we believe the city centre bus gates are important as well as the Tranche 2 measures. No one community should have advantages conferred upon them at the expense of others. The building of an evidence base for LTNs is valuable for ensuring that the best decisions are taken.

As highways schemes, the County Council are the only authority which can implement them. To date the City Council has not been formally involved by that council in LTN developments, however we are always pressing the County Council to consult, build evidence, and implement LTNs in the best way possible for residents and businesses. We regret this lack of consultation and engagement. The City Council is well placed to play a role regarding consultation, including through our inclusive transport and movement focus group, to which the County and City Councils have received excellent input on transport plans.

The City Council supports LTNs in principle, believes they can address key challenges, and seeks to work with colleagues at the County Council on their development. Thank you for joining Full Council and for taking part in the debate about LTNs.

3. Address by Tim Jones and Dwayne John, Oxford African Caribbean MultiCultural Association

Dear Oxford City Councillors,

As you are aware, sadly Oxford no longer has the Afro Caribbean Club, and as a group of mainly African Caribbeans, we have come together to form the Oxford African Caribbean Multicultural Association (OACMA), as we believe it was absolutely critical for Oxford to have its own multicultural hub in the community.

Having spoken with countless people in Oxford the need for a community hub is very clear. Thus, we write to you appealing for your support to help OACMA acquire Cowley Marsh Pavilion building as a social and community hub for our association.

The “Windrush Hub” would exist to:

1. Provide adults, parents, carers, and children a space to gain support from each other through various groups.
2. Provide assistance for anyone suffering from domestic violence.
3. Provide low cost meals at the “Windrush Hub Cafe”.
4. Provide a legal advisory service for youths/adults subjected to stop and search etc.
5. Assist isolated members of the community, and provide them with a social hub.
6. Provide activities and classes for social, mental, and physical well being.
7. Give recognition to talent in community through, exhibitions and display, talent shows and plays, etc.
8. Set up an advisory service to deal with financial and housing issues.
9. Mentor and support young people with continuing education and career paths.
10. To set up a health and wellbeing hub in partnership with other health organisations.
11. Work with charities and the local authorities to provide a food bank/food larder for those struggling in the community.
12. Provide a space for learning of all ages and abilities such as homework clubs, training, adult learning, and multicultural history, etc.
13. Put on various events around cultural diversity such as social gatherings, yoga festival, art therapy classes, dance classes, and music lessons, etc.
14. Provide highly experienced exercise and fitness instructors to run classes and workshops for the different age groups.

OACMA has started fundraising with a view to covering running costs for the hub (CMP building) and are in the process of applying for sponsorship and charitable funds.

In addition we have submitted to the Cabinet Member and Head of Service projected figures from potential income from yoga classes and the dominoes club, which will be a major part of what we hope the association will be able to offer the community on a ongoing basis through what we'd like to call the “Windrush Hub”, a community venture based at the CMP on a long term “peppercorn rate” lease. We can only begin to generate these revenues once we have access to the Cowley Marsh Pavilion (CMP) building.

We are well aware that there are other Afro Caribbean, multi-cultural, and LGBT groups that we are personally connected to that could also benefit from having access to the Windrush Hub, whilst also contributing additional revenues to the charity, and we have initiated discussions with them, but were not able to give more specific details in time for the next City Council meeting on October 5th 2020.

However, we can continue to keep you updated on progress from these discussions as they evolve.

We appeal to Oxford City and County Councils to consider this request and the detailed proposal that we have submitted to the Cabinet Member and Head of Service. It would be fantastic if we could gain access to the building at a peppercorn rate in time to host some specific events during 'Black History Month', so we would very much appreciate a speedy and positive response on this.

The Leader of the Council read a response on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities, Cllr Tidball*

I want to begin by thanking the Oxford African Caribbean Multicultural Association (OACMA) for submitting their proposal to councillors, I can see how much thought, work and passion has gone into putting this important initiative together – so thank you.

I'm pleased to note that the Council has been working with OACMA in providing advice in relation to this proposal, and I'm also aware that there are other groups that have also expressed similar interest in relation to Cowley Marsh Pavilion, only to be deterred when realising the capital costs required.

Therefore, I'm going to ask Oxford City Council to continue to work with organisations like OACMA to develop proposals that fully consider **all** the cost implications, rather than a focus on just the services that may be offered. This will ensure energies that are invested in developing such proposals have an opportunity to truly be successful and potentially sustainable too.

Given the potentially high capital costs and level of risk associated with managing large sites, I would recommend that OACMA initially, and in the interim, seek to utilise existing community facilities through individual booking arrangements as this could further support the demonstration of need, and support help with developing more long term proposals. Additionally I have asked officers to work with you to identify spaces in existing community venues for ad-hoc booking or rent at the subsidised rates for community organisations, so you can undertake the initiatives you are proposing for Black History Month, whilst ensuring you are also supported and advised on the public health advice for COVID-19.

That said, I want to assure OACMA and other community groups that have expressed similar needs or demands to councillors, that as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion work, we will be reviewing the use of community assets to ensure that they do work better for all the diverse communities of Oxford, in a much more inclusive context. This will benefit not just the generations of today, in fact, the diversity and generations of tomorrow too.

**Cllr Tidball had difficulty with her remote connection and was not able to speak to the meeting at this point*

4. (a) Address by Tim Bearder – Oxford Green Belt and the Liberal Democrat motion at item 17h

Last week Sir David Attenborough called on world leaders to do more to protect nature. He made his plea as 65 heads of state and government, including the UK's, signed a global pledge to reverse losses in the natural world by 2030.

They were doing this because a UN report found that around one million species are now threatened with extinction.

This often sounds like an abstract problem that is having an impact on the Amazon but not here in the UK and yet a quarter of our native mammals now at risk of extinction here in the UK.

Our own MP made an impassioned speech to the House of Commons last year in which she said: “.... we also need to make sure we are protecting Wildlife in every single new development and that particularly includes those between Oxford and Cambridge.”

Yet when the Sydlings Copse nature reserve is threatened by over 1,100 new houses, Anneliese Dodds has remained deafening silent. The Wildlife Trust have said this new development would be a disaster for rare species in our local woods but Ms Dodds has (so far) refused to challenge developers or her Labour city councillors who support them. Isn't it time she spoke out?

I know that members of this council, of all stripes, want to see more houses built, as we should! But as Anneliese pointed out, it must be done with the environment at the heart of everything we do. We can't just keep saying these things and then doing the opposite.

So when you back the Lib Dem motion before you today, and I sincerely hope that you will, please also act to condemn the destruction of sensitive Green Belt land that the Wild Life Trust have said will have a seriously negative impact on rare and endangered species close to Barton Sandhills and Risinghurst.

Warm words followed by inaction is no longer an option.

4. (b)Address by Andrew Heaver – Oxford Green Belt and the Liberal Democrat motion at item 17h

The evidence is mounting: access to clean air, and to green spaces, and to nature, is essential for public health. Take a look at the website of the government-funded NHS Forest project, and you'll see an enormous list of scientific reports, documenting peer-reviewed confirmation that being able to spend time amongst trees and greenery has real and detectable benefits on our respiratory health, and our cardiac health, and our mental health. Starkly, the evidence tells us that when all other factors are equal, citizens with access to trees and greenspace tend to live longer than those without.

The last few months have made all of this data very 'real'. Many of us know from our own personal experience that being able to get out into breathable air, and wild countryside, has made the fear and claustrophobia of lockdown easier to survive. More than ever before in our lifetimes, we know how important trees, wildlife and countryside are for our wellbeing.

This knowledge, however, is tempered by the sad reality that people in less wealthy communities can often have poorer access to trees and greenspace than their wealthier counterparts. Driving to a National Park or to a National Trust property is difficult, when you don't have a car. National Trust membership is hard to pay for when you're struggling to work out how to pay your gas bills and your food bills.

Oxford's answer to this social justice problem has long been its green belt. Oxford's green belt has made it possible for those of us who have grown up, and lived, and worked in some of the city's least wealthy wards, such as Barton and Sandhills, to escape into the countryside, to enjoy the clean air and the trees. Even if our means have been limited. It has made it possible for us to live healthier lives, even if we can't afford the privileges available to Oxford's wealthier residents.

In tough times, when we have struggled with anxieties, or with financial worries, or with poor health, we have been able to find peace and solace in the countryside. Without delay, and without cost.

In this toughest of all years, that access has mattered as much as ever before. And yet, in this toughest of years, residents of Barton, Sandhills and other communities have had to face up to the grim reality that this access is about to be snatched away. A thousand new houses are to be built on the countryside and wildlife habitats next to Barton and Sandhills. Thousands more are to be built elsewhere. The planning inspector is allowing this destruction to proceed. Even though the developers were not able to tell him clearly, in the hearings, how they will provide safe road access to the urban extensions proposed for Barton and Sandhills. Even though the developers could not clarify how they will actually deliver the affordable houses they say they will build. Even though the developers were not able to clarify how deliverable their schemes will actually prove to be, once they have addressed matters of topography, hydrology, archaeology and road access.

The planning inspector, however, was able to reassure himself with a firm statement from this city council's planning officers, who told him that this council fully supports the proposals.

Residents in Barton, Sandhills, and other communities understand the need for more housing, and for better housing, in Oxford. What is not acceptable, however, is the decision by the city council to trash our air quality, and our access to countryside, and our road safety, for a scheme that doesn't actually offer any guarantees of affordable housing. For a scheme that can't even confirm where the thousands of extra cars will access the existing road network. Much will be destroyed, in return for few guarantees of any real improvement to life in our neighbourhoods. In this toughest of years, people who depend on the green belt for their health and wellbeing have been taught a bitter lesson: trees, wildlife and countryside might be essential for our health, but Oxford's Labour administration seems to prioritise the profits of the few ahead of the health of the many. I urge the administration to take a look into their hearts, and think about where their priorities should lie. I urge this council to ensure that local voices are listened to, and that local democracy prevails over imposed plans, whose spurious benefits will not be enjoyed by the local people whose quality of life is being sacrificed.

Written response from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, Cllr Hollingsworth, read out at the meeting

The shortage of housing, in particular affordable housing, in Oxford is something that is clear to all of us. That need was quantified in detailed work done for Oxford's Local Plan 2036, and has been rigorously tested over and over again in public hearings for Local Plans across the whole of Oxfordshire. As the Local Plan makes clear, the primary driver – indeed the overwhelming driver - for overall housing need in Oxford is the need for affordable housing for the city's current and future citizens.

The Oxford Local Plan 2036 also established that even with exhaustive searches for new sites, releases of Green Belt land in Oxford for housing development, increases in density and height of buildings and the establishment of car-free development as the

norm across much of the city, there was a substantial gap between the need for housing in Oxford and the capacity to provide it.

It is because of that gap that all the councils in Oxfordshire agreed to help to identify sites in their control that could be assigned to meet Oxford's unmet need for housing. Beyond assuming that the housing need that has been confirmed must be met, and proposing a principle that sites close to the city were preferable for both transport and community connectivity reasons, the City Council – other than for the Grenoble Road site where it is a landowner – has always left it to the best judgement of the four district councils to decide where best these sites could be found. Where sites have been proposed that meet that principle, the City Council as a formal consultee has been supportive, but again left the final decision to the relevant district council and the process of their local plan examination. That is as true of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan as it has been of the Local Plans of the other three district councils.

South Oxfordshire's affordable housing policy for sites close to Oxford is to require 50% affordable housing, of which 40% should be affordable rented, 35% social rented and 25% other affordable routes to home ownership. While different to the policy of the City Council, which requires a greater proportion of social rented properties, it is nonetheless in line with the basis for the housing need figure for Oxford, which assumes that 50% of all new housing is affordable under the Government definition.

As Cllr Bearder says, 'warm words followed by inaction is no longer an option'. For years the need for more, and more affordable, housing in Oxford has been obvious, and the result of the current round of Local Plans across Oxfordshire is that that need is finally being recognised and met. To say "we want more houses built" to meet the needs of Oxford's current and future citizens, but then to do absolutely nothing about it is the very definition of warm words followed by inaction.

Balancing the needs of past, current and future generations, and the needs for homes, jobs, communities and the environment is difficult, and involves difficult decisions and compromises. The Local Plans put forward and adopted across Oxfordshire by councillors of all political stripes have faced up to those challenges and put forward policies to meet them. Pretending that they don't exist, and shying away from having to address them – 'cake-ism' as our Prime Minister would have it – is simply dishonest.

5. Address in support of motion 17k on Domestic abuse and Covid 19 workplace and community safety

I am here to speak to you as a previous victim of domestic violence to explain some of the issues we victims of domestic violence face in escaping abuse and starting again

- trying numerous times to seek help and leave the relationship, and even separating several times, but each time encountering different obstacles.
- difficulties such as having moved to the UK due to an arranged marriage and having no one around for support, immigration status, still on a spouse visa.
- when working part-time and with a mortgage, not entitled to any benefits.
- advised by Women's Aid to go to a hotel if the victim finds the home environment unbearable, but unable to afford this.
- even after fleeing to a women's refuge, with children, after an attempt on her life, not qualifying for benefits and after a week advised to get a private rented property as the refuge fees were much higher.
- every time, being forced to return to the abusive relationship, as it is hard to survive on a part-time job with no support for victims and their children.

However, the situation can be different.

- Working full-time means the ability to support yourself.
- Good employers, such as Oxford Health, have a fantastic employee support scheme in place.
- The support victims receive at work, from their team, their managers and the occupational health, allowing the time off work whenever needed it, or to work flexibly and so deal with any problems.

Written response and verbal reply from the Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford, Cllr Upton

We thank you for your bravery in coming to speak to us today about your experience and those of others. Domestic Abuse is deeply traumatic for all those suffering from it and is made worse if proper help is not available when someone has the courage to reach out for it. In Oxford we have a range of support available and we welcome your help in ensuring that more people know about it.

- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service offers a helpline which will make a safety plan, assess risk and provide a listening service and access to a range of support, which includes:
 - 1-2-1 with an outreach worker who will provide both practical and emotional support
 - Group work to understand abuse and that it is never the victim's fault
 - Refuge provision for women and children who have had no option but to escape to a safe place (women only)
- 'Reducing the Risk' provide crisis support with an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor for victims who are at high risk of significant harm. In addition they deliver training and manage a network of over 1000 frontline specially trained Domestic Abuse Champions in both statutory and voluntary agencies across Oxfordshire.
- SAFE! offers support to children from aged 5 to young adults who have witnessed domestic abuse and a programme for families where there is child on parent violence.
- Oxford City Council, Sanctuary Hosting and Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service have developed a pathway for women on spousal visas who are being

abused to ensure they have safe accommodation when fleeing until they are granted leave to remain (women only).

- Oxford Against Cutting are holding Web Café's to raise awareness of Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation

These existing services will be added to in the very near future:

- A Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse Support Worker will be working with victims and with community groups.
- SAFE! will be starting a programme for children aged 11 to 15 who have witnessed domestic abuse in the home.
- Elmore will have 10 Domestic Abuse Case Workers, 5 working with victims and 5 with perpetrators, assisting in the new Children's Social Care Family Solutions Model.

We can always do more, and we are actively looking for ways to improve our offer to people experiencing domestic abuse. No one should have to suffer this alone.

We all applaud you for coming along tonight and I am glad to hear you are in a much better place now. We have some award winning at the council who work to reduce domestic violence, some nationally recognised, but I am aware that not everyone can access our services and I really hope that we can do more. Thank you for taking this from the realm of dry statistics to making us see something of the real life horror of the situation that you've been in. Thank you very much for coming.

6. Address by Colin Aldridge - Vagrancy act of 1824

I come here today to speak about the Vagrancy act of 1824 which is still in force in England and Wales to this day. Even when first agreed this act was criticized. William Wilberforce was a British politician, philanthropist, and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade. He condemned the Act for being a catch-all offence because it did not consider the circumstances as to why an individual had found themselves in such a predicament.

See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vagrancy_Act_1824

The law was enacted to deal with the increasing numbers of homeless and penniless urban poor in England and Wales following the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars. Nine years after the Battle of Waterloo the British Army and Navy had undergone a massive reduction in size, leaving large numbers of discharged military personnel without jobs or accommodation. Many were living rough on the streets or in makeshift camps. At the same time a massive influx of economic migrants from Ireland and Scotland arrived in England, especially London, in search of work.

The act promotes and legitimises an attitude of dehumanisation of homeless people. Before the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (Harry and Megan) the leader of Windsor and Maidenhead council encouraged police to use the act to clear the streets of Windsor so the town was prepared for the considerable influx of tourists.

<http://www.oxfordstudent.com/2091/03/03/the-vagrancy-act-is-a-blight-on-the-homeless-and-must-be-repealed/>

The Act was used to prosecute 1,320 people during 2018 and is most employed by police as a threat to force rough sleepers to relocate. Fines levied under the Act are often deducted from weekly benefit payments.

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/08/02/vagr-a02.html>

I could list many facts and figures to prove this act deserves to be repealed but the reality is people who find themselves homeless are not criminals through being homeless. They do not deserve criminalising but do need a home and help.

There is many cross-party MP's working to deal with this act, why not give them a helping hand. I feel Oxford should make a firm statement let's make Oxford a city which asks our police not to use this law and then encourage other places to do the same. It's time for action let's make a difference.

This act has gone through several change including implementation in Scotland and Ireland which was later removed.

Finally, after almost 200 years this act is still adopted (which was discriminating against mainly British servicemen) and still using it. Having moved on from the last 200 years ask yourself if this was a new act today would you vote for it?

If you would like to see a small insight to homelessness, I would urge you to volunteer at one of the homeless shelters or establishments feeding them.

Thank you for your attention.

Written response from the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing and Housing the Homeless, Cllr Rowley, summarised verbally at the meeting

Thank you for your address. The City Council does not have police powers, but supports repeal of the Vagrancy Act and there is cross-party endorsement for this position. I'm also proud to support the Labour Homelessness Campaign, of which Cllr

Shaista Aziz is one of the founders, which had its beginnings here in Oxford and has done valuable campaigning to draw attention to the effect of this obsolete legislation.

The City Council and its partners have reaffirmed our aim that nobody should be forced to sleep rough in Oxford. We believe that rough sleeping and begging can only be eliminated by offering individual tailored support to rough sleepers across the full range of their needs, not just housing but mental and physical health, employment and education too.

This year in particular, we've seen how the certainty of a safe bed during lockdown gave many people the bit of stability they needed to start having conversations about leaving the streets behind for good. Since lockdown started in March we've already helped 93 people to move on into more sustainable housing, and this is something we're going to keep on doing, together with excellent organisations such as Oxford Homeless Pathways, St. Mungo's, Crisis and Aspire.

It's an outrage that in one of the wealthiest cities in the world so many people are forced to sleep rough on our streets. We would welcome your support in framing policies and practices which will give real support to the street homeless and steadily reduce the numbers of people forced to sleep on the streets. Thank you once again for your continuing contribution.

7. Address by Magdalene Sacranie - The Charter for Compassion

Good Evening Lord Mayor, Council Members, Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Magdalene Sacranie.

Thank you for this opportunity of speaking to you again about The Charter for Compassion and the suggestion that Oxford declares and celebrates being a City of Compassion by signing this Charter.

Perhaps some of you visited < www.charterforcompassion.org > following my address to the chamber in January 2020. Back then, none of us could have predicted that Covid19 was going to have such an extended and global impact on our lives.

We have just passed the 1million mark of people who have sadly lost their life due to the pandemic. The challenge for the world is how can we all live safely alongside this virus. The Oxford research scientists are working hard on a vaccine which could then provide part of the answer. But for many of us considering this existential threat, we are talking about pre- and post-Covid19, and using and hearing words such as re-set and re-think.

Many of us have witnessed the outpouring of kindness, thoughtfulness and neighbourliness in our communities. We are all learning that to keep ourselves safe and our lives moving ahead, we must abide by simple directives that are designed to keep everyone well and the “other” safe.

In our world we have around 2million cities that all have struggles with poverty, homelessness, inadequate education and growing inequalities.

We have the technology, the people, the money, the volunteers...but the world is not working. Could the missing piece be Compassion?

The collective wisdom at the core of all cultures, philosophies and religions, from 1500 BC to the present day, has never gone beyond the advice, or The Golden Rule, to de-throne self and place the other at the centre. Archbishop Rowan Williams says that we need to make the transition from self-centredness to other-centeredness.

A compassionate City such as Oxford is uncomfortable when there are still residents whose lives are not thriving and flourishing or allowing each one to reach their potential.

By signing The Charter for Compassion, Oxford will join the 430+ cities around the world who have declared themselves Compassionate Cities. The Charter, a kind of indeterminate vision statement is meant to galvanize, connect and encourage actions that will create a more compassionate world.

In these challenging times, there is a real need to develop a ground of Compassion to regulate and re-set new ways of executing, planning, reforming and building our lives.

It is time now, to celebrate goodness and kindness.

The Charter for Compassion invites communities of all sizes to integrate and bring Compassion to life in practical and specific ways: in businesses, schools, environmental projects and faith congregations etc. And on the website there are suggested steps for a city to take on that compassion journey and the C4C Community Tool Box has “tools” to help.

If the City of Oxford decides to sign the Charter for Compassion, these steps might include a core group identifying, for example, Oxford’s discomforts: (This might be, shall we say, the happiness and well-being of our children); and then analysing the challenges and opportunities and choosing an initial focus for short and long term objectives: (In our example, this may be embedding compassion-based education in our schools); other steps would include working towards a public resolution and

affirmation of The Charter for Compassion in a launch event and sharing as a Charter Partner, Oxford's experiences with the global network.

In conclusion, as a Charter Partner, Oxford would be working towards a more compassionate world and also to achieving the United Nation's 17 SDG's which are all interdependent and centred around people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

Oxford's twinned city Leiden signed The Charter for Compassion over 10 years ago and hopefully the Mayor of Leiden has communicated the benefits of Charter partnership to our Lord Mayor.

I humbly urge you to consider this proposal most seriously. Thankyou.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Susan Brown, gave a verbal response summarising the text below

I'd like to thank Ms Sacranie for once again addressing us on this subject. I can see this is clearly an issue dear to her heart, and I have also heard from our twin city of Leiden about the work they are doing as a City of Compassion. The need for compassion in public life has always been important, and the last few months have, I believe, shown our city living those values.

Councillors' values are reflected in the aims and priorities that we have agreed as a council and the debates we frequently have as a full Council which are about issues that we feel strongly about.

Our newly adopted Council Strategy sets out our priority to tackle inequality. Our services, investments and policy-making are all designed to address the social and financial inequalities across Oxford. We value diversity and seek to build community cohesion. We want to ensure all Oxford's citizens have fair opportunities and a real share in the city's future.

That principle drives the work we do, from our investment and focus on tackling the climate emergency and poor air quality; our work to prevent homelessness and support those who are sleeping rough into a life off the streets; to our support for those on low incomes and our work with and investment in our communities and community groups.

We are already a City of Sanctuary, accommodating and supporting refugees and asylum seekers. We do not have all of the levers we might like to tackle some of the issues, but recognise that we can play a role in providing leadership, working in partnership with other public agencies, NGOs and businesses and influencing others as we are seeking to do through our work to promote an inclusive economy, promoting the Oxford Living Wage and tackling health inequalities.

I have looked at the Charter for Compassion website and I note that it recommends starting with community groups. I have to give Ms Sacranie the same message that I would give to someone seeking a twinning relationship between our city and another. We would encourage a strong community base to be in place before we could consider supporting this at a council level. If I use the example of the relatively recent Ramallah twinning, a grassroots friendship group had been working for nearly 20 years (perhaps a little longer than we would expect) before a formal twinning link was made. Similarly the city council worked with local asylum groups for many years before we formally declared ourselves a City of Sanctuary.

I applaud your aims, and while I believe that Oxford is recognised as a compassionate city, if you would like us to make this more formal, I think that we need to see that there are groups to work with in our local communities on these specific aims.

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